S.P.A.R.K.™

Super Powered Action Roleplaying Kit

THE "JUMPSTART™" SUPER FUZION™ RULES

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Sean's Dedication: *To my development partner, Albert, for being a source of both inspiration and consternation – both are vital to making a good work even better. To the Fuzion Mailing List (especially Jason Dour, Bill Beane, Christian Conkle, Dustin Evermore, Chris Weible, and Paul Wilcox) for their staunch and stalwart support of all that we do, as well as their own unique contributions to the work. To all the fans, who will never truly understand just how much they give me.*

Albert's Dedication: *To **my** development partner, Sean, for being obstinate, stubborn, and generally correct when it comes to good game design. This game started out as a way for me to run villains easier and I just mentioned to Sean that I would like to be able to fit characters on a trading card. I came up with some minor notes, and Sean wrote what you see here. He is the Quarterback to my Coach. To Marcus Pregent, for the idea of Action Studios. To everyone who thought we could do this, thanks!*

Welcome to the slam-bang world of super powered role-playing in the FUZION™ System. These rules will let you run or play in a fast, flexible game within minutes. Additionally, characters created using these rules are fully compatible with any Total FUZION game. They are designed to go hand-in-hand with our own upcoming **Alpha/Omega**, **Hollywood Action Heroes** and **Albert Deschesne's Metaverse™**, and they also work well with such games as Christian Conkle's **Lightspeed** and R. Talsorian's **Cyberpunk V.3.**

To better understand these basic rules, watch for words or phrases that are **bold**; look at the end of this document and you will find a Glossary of Terms that will explain them better.

Please Note - The S.P.A.R.K. material is meant to be an important tool for Fuzion GMs as much as anything. It is a framework upon which other Fuzion stuff can be placed. As such, you may see S.P.A.R.K.-style characters with Powers, Skill Groups, Talents, or other elements that are not listed in these rules. That is **perfectly fine** and an intended result of this design. S.P.A.R.K. Characters are meant to be immanently upgrade-friendly.

Part 1: A Hero Is Born

The following steps will have you playing a character of your own making for any super powered setting.

What Price, Power?

The **Game Master** needs to decide what kind of game it is going to be. This will determine how many **Points** you can start with to build your **Character**.

If you are playing an **Alpha Game** (a low-powered, typically street-level game), you will have **65** Points to spend. These Points are spent on your **Characteristics**, **Skill Groups**, **Talents**, and **Powers**. The Alpha Game assumes an average Characteristic Rating of between 4 and 5, Skill

Groups between 3 and 5, Attacks at around 10-11d6 in power and Armor around 20-22. An Alpha Game has a **Combat Rating** of **21**.

A **Beta Game** (new superheroes, just getting into "the business") provides **80** Points for the players to spend on their heroes. The average Characteristic Rating of a Beta Game is somewhere between 5 and 6, Skill Groups at 4-6, Attacks around 11-12d6, and Armor at around 22-24. Beta Games have Combat Ratings of **24**.

Gamma Games (the respectably powerful heroes who often defend a city or region) start at **100** Points. Characteristics average between 6 and 7, and Skill Groups at 5-8. Attacks come in around 12-13d6, and Armor at around 26-28. The Combat Rating of a Gamma Game is **27**.

With **Delta Games** (powerful, world-changing heroes), the point total goes up to **125**. Characteristics lie in the 7-8 range, while Skill Groups are 6-9. Attacks fall in the 13-15d6 range, and Armor averages at around 30. The Combat Rating of a Delta Game is **30**.

Few games will start at the **Omega Game** level (the realm of "gods among men," those who save the universe weekly), which gives a minimum of **150** starting Points. Characteristics are at the 9-10 range, with Skill Groups ranging up past 10. Attacks are usually at least 16-18d6, and Armor values of 32-36 are common. The Combat Rating of an Omega Game is at least **33**.

The suggested point expenditures are just that " suggestions. Individual players should spend how they like, just as long as their Heroes fit within the Combat Rating for the game.

The Characteristics

These are what define what your Character is like and how well that character can do things. Normal humans have Characteristics in the 1 (Pathetic) to 8 (Incredible) ranges. There are **four (4)** Characteristics in "JumpStart" FUZION "

> **PHYSICAL (PHY)**: A measure of your Character's Strength, Constitution, Body, and other matters of muscle, health, and toughness. Whenever you hit someone with your bare fists, you will do your PHY in dice of **Knock Out Damage**.
>
> **MENTAL (MEN)**: A measure of your Character's Intelligence, Willpower, Presence, Spirit, and other intangible aspects of their makeup. Anything to do with science, magic, awareness, and Lore will involve your MEN rating.
>
> **COMBAT (COM)**: A measure of your Character's Reflex, Dexterity, Technique, and other hand-eye coordination and agility matters. Whenever you are trying to hit something or not be hit, your COM rating is paramount.
>
> **MOVE (MOV)**: A measure of your Character's ability to get from A to B over any terrain.

The Stats

These are indications of specific things each Character can do or sustain, and they are based directly upon the Characteristics. You don't put any Points into these; you simply follow the math instructions and jot down the results.

Hits: A measure of how much permanent Damage your Character can take before they are **Dead**. Hits are measured as your Physical Characteristic multiplied by 5.

> **Hits = PHY x 5**

Stun: A measure of how much temporary Damage your Character can take before being **Dazed** or **Knocked Out**. Stun is measured as your Physical Characteristic multiplied by 5.

Stun = PHY x 5

Defense: A measure of how tough your Character is when it comes to **Knock Out** attacks. Your Defense (or your ARMOR, if that value is actually *higher*) is subtracted from the Damage rolled for a Knock Out attack before anything is taken off of your Stun. Defense is measured as your Physical Characteristic multiplied by 2.

Defense = PHY x 2

Threshold: A measure of how much lethal Damage your Character can take in *one attack* and remain functioning. Particularly devastating Deadly Damage Attacks can take the fight right out of someone; if ever your Character suffers an amount of **Hits** from a Deadly Damage attack that exceeds your Threshold rating, that Character is immediately dropped to 0 Stun, is Dazed, and Knocked Down. Threshold is measured as your Physical Characteristic multiplied by 2, *plus* your Mental Characteristic.

Threshold = (PHY x 2) + MEN

Perception: A measure of how astute and aware of things your Character is. This number acts as an **Action Value** whenever your Character is searching for something, or else when the Game Master wants to see if your Character notices something. Perception is measured as your Mental Characteristic multiplied by 2.

Perception = MEN x 2

Concentration: A measure of how focused and mentally steady your Character is. This number acts as an **Action Value** whenever a Character wants to spend some time focusing on a task (perhaps gaining a bonus to their final roll, depending on how well they do on a Concentration roll). It also acts as a **Defense Value** if any Psi Powers are used against the Character (something that might come into play if other Alpha/Omega powers are brought to bear in a game where this SPARK Character exists). Concentration, like Perception, is measured as your Mental Characteristic multiplied by 2. It stands as a separate Stat because it can be uniquely modified by certain Talents.

Concentration = MEN x 2

Talent Counts for Something, and Money is Power...

These are special abilities, benefits, enhancements, or other distinctive aspects that some Characters have over the rest of folks in the world. You don't need to purchase any of these for your Character, but some may prove useful to you. The cost for each Talent is **1 Point**. Those Talents marked with a ***** can be purchased multiple times (but usually no more than twice or three times; the Game Master must decide).

ACUTE HEARING: The Character hears in a wider range and more effectively than others; +3 on all Perception and related rolls.

ACUTE SENSE OF SMELL: The Character smells a wider range of odors more distinctly than most and can identify things and creatures based on such information; +3 on all Perception and related rolls.

ACUTE VISION: The Character sees more clearly over a longer range than most and possesses excellent nighttime vision; +3 on all Perception and related rolls. Also, the first –2 for Range Penalties is offset.

ALTERNATE IDENTITY*: The character has a second, established identity that they can take on in a given area. Certain other perks may be dependent on this second identity.

AMBIDEXTERITY: The Character uses both hands equally well. If they are using two weapons in Melee combat, they can perform the "Attack Twice" Maneuver with no AV penalty (though the DV penalty still applies).

AUTHORITY: The Character has the ability to dispense justice and otherwise command respect and duty from those within their area of influence. This authority may stem from being a police officer, government agent, or similarly empowered individual.

BEAUTIFUL/HANDSOME*: The Character gains +3 on all rolls where looks would count.

CHARISMATIC*: The Character has natural leadership and inspirational talents; +3 on all rolls where this would come into play.

COMBAT SENSE*: The Character has a natural gift for combat situations, gaining +2 on all **Initiative** rolls.

FAST DRAW: The Character is able to draw one-handed weapons in no time.

FOCUSED: The Character is level-headed and able to stay intent on the task at hand; +3 to the **Concentration** Stat.

HARD TO KILL*: The Character gains +10 to their Hits (this can be purchased twice only).

LIGHT SLEEPER: The Character needs no roll to awaken if noise is made, and they are instantly awake with no ill effects.

NIGHT VISION: The Character sees almost as well in the day as at night, although not in true pitch black darkness.

PERFECT MEMORY*: The Character remembers pretty much everything they have read, seen, or heard; +3 on all rolls where this would come into play.

PHYSICALLY GIFTED*: The Character is very capable in physical situations; +3 on all rolls where this would some into play (**except** for Combat rolls).

SOLID*: The Character gains +5 to their Defense (this can be purchased twice only).

STALWART*: The Character gains +10 to their Stun (this can be purchased twice only).

STATUS: The Character holds an influential position in society, complete with the appropriate resources. This is often combined with AUTHORITY.

WEALTH*: The Character has extraordinary monetary resources. One level of this indicates a rich person (no need to work, expensive cars and vacations, great home). Two levels indicates a multi-billionaire, owning multiple companies and having access to nigh-unlimited resources (this can be purchased twice only).

Knowing is Half the Battle

Now you must choose what Skill Groups your Character has knowledge and experience in. These Skill Groups cover a wide range of training, education, and applied know-how. Each Point placed in a Skill Group gives it a +1 rating; if you put 4 Points in Athlete, you have a Level of 4 in that Skill Group.

Skill Groups include a number of distinct skills and areas of training, which is helpful for conversion to Total Fuzion games, but it is also a good indication of the kinds of things you should expect to be able to do with that Group. There is some overlap where these Skills are concerned; whenever you are attempting something where you have more than one Skill Group that could cover it, simply use the one with the higher Level. If the GM is feeling generous, they may grant a bonus based on having more than one applicable Skill Group.

Listed with each Skill Group is a default **Characteristic** that is added to the Skill Group value whenever rolling for an Action. However, there may be times when the Game Master decides that a different Characteristic is appropriate. For example, most of the time Soldier is actually based on the Mental (MEN) Characteristic. However, when your Character is disarming a bomb, the Game Master may decide you need to replace Mental with your Combat (COM) value instead.

Note " It is entirely appropriate to create new Skill Groups as needed for a concept. For example, a GM may allow someone to have the Skill Group **SAILOR** to represent their facility with ships, sea craft, and navigation. Simply use the existing Skill Groups as guidelines in creating these new Skill Groups.

ATHLETE (COM)

The Athlete is good at physical activity, including jumping, climbing, throwing things, and moving well. At the Player's choice, their rating in Athlete can be used to determine their **Defense Value** to avoid being hit by attacks.

DETECTIVE (MEN)

The Detective is trained to look for clues, follow leads, and combine scientific methods with intuitive "hunches" to figure out the truth behind mysteries. A Detective is good at lab work, but even better in the field, tracking down the answers.

DOCTOR (MEN)

The Doctor knows how to help those who are sick or injured, and they are also skilled in many sciences related to biology and anatomy.

DRIVER (COM)

The Driver knows how to get behind the wheel of almost any land-based vehicle and make it move fast and well. They also know a little something about how to get a vehicle going when it breaks down.

ENGINEER (MEN)

The Engineer is a master of machines, electricity, and structures. They understand how to build and tear down things, and how to make things work or not work on a big scale.

LINGUIST (N/A)

The Linguist is a master of languages and communication. Each level represents a separate language known to the Linguist (no rolls needed).

MARTIAL ARTIST (COM)

The Martial Artist is skilled in the ways of hand-to-hand and melee combat. This Skill Group is used whenever the Character needs an AV to hit something with their bare hands or a melee weapon. At the Player's choice, this rating can also be used as their DV to avoid being hit by any hand-to-hand or melee attack.

OCCULTIST (MEN)

The Occultist is knowledgeable about all things related to magic, mysticism, and the spirit world. They know rituals, legends, runes, and all other related lore on some level.

PARANORMAL (COM)

The Paranormal has powers beyond those of normal people. This Skill Group represents their ability to manipulate those powers, including using them to attack others. As such, the Paranormal AV is used in combat whenever Powers are used.

PERFORMER (MEN)

The Performer entertains people through acting, singing, dancing, and other means. This Skill Group can be fairly useful in covert situations, as well.

PILOT (COM)

The Pilot can fly just about anything that gets off the ground, and they know a little something about keeping their machines in the air.

PROFESSIONAL (MEN)

The Professional is a businessman, lawyer, politician, marketing director, or similar sort of person. They understand management, manipulation, working the numbers, and using "the system."

SCHOLAR (MEN)

The Scholar knows many things related to history, literature, sociology, economics, and a host of other fields. They are a master of research and retention.

SCIENTIST (MEN)

The Scientist is the delver into the mysteries of the physical universe. The use test tubes and scientific methods to master physics, chemistry, thermodynamics, and dozens of other fields of inquiry.

SOCIALITE (MEN)

The Socialite is at home in the high life, knowing all the right people, latest styles, and where the best parties are. They can navigate the shark infested waters of Manhattan, Milan, L.A., and Paris with the best of them.

SOLDIER (MEN)

The Soldier is a warrior schooled in the modern forms of combat. They are comfortable with small arms, heavy weapons, vehicle weapons, and demolitions.

SPY (MEN)

The Spy lives in the shadows when possible and hides in plain daylight when necessary. They are skilled at observation, infiltration, sabotage, and counter-intelligence.

SURVIVALIST (MEN)

The Survivalist understands their environment intimately, and they know how to live and even thrive in the worst conditions. They are also skilled at hunting, tracking, and first aid.

TECHNICIAN (MEN)

What the Engineer is to the great machines and structures of the world, the Technician is to the smaller, everyday machinery of life. They are masters of computers, communication, and electronics of all kinds.

THIEF (COM)

The Thief knows how to get in, get what they want, and get out. They are masters of picking locks, moving stealthily, bypassing security, filching items, and disappearing into the shadows of the underworld to find a buyer for what they've stolen.

Feel the Power!

One of the key aspects of this game is the ability to have and use Super Powers. For a truly rich and detailed experience, you will want to use one of the many Total Fuzion options that are available for creating and using Powers. Our own **Alpha/Omega** will the ideal place to go, since these rules are specifically designed to work with them. However, any Fuzion-based source of powers should be relatively easy to incorporate in part or in whole.

For fast and easy game play, what follows will get the job done. However, only fairly limited character concepts are possible using these base rules, as only Powers that are very easy to use and understand have been included here.

The first thing you need to do is decide on a primary source for your power. In other words, how do you do what you do? This is also called the **Special Effect** of your powers. Some typical Special Effects are:

> **Flame, Ice, Cosmic Energy, Magic, Battlesuit, Gadgets, Electricity, Earth, Air, Telekinesis, Bio-Energy, Magnetics,** etc..

You get the picture.

Once you do this, it should be a simple matter of selecting the actual Powers you want and spending the point.

There are four categories of Powers " **Attack Powers**, **Defense Powers**, **Movement Powers** and **Miscellaneous Powers.**

Attack Powers

You have three ways you can buy Attack Powers related to your Special Effect. You can buy a straight-up ***Attack***, a ***Minor Attack Group***, or a ***Major Attack Group***

Attacks do one thing – dice of damage. For every **1 Point** you spend, you get **+1d6** of **Knock Out Damage** related to your Special Effect. This Damage can be done in melee or at range, it doesn't matter.

Minor Attack Groups give you a little more flexibility. They cost more – **2 Points** for every **+1d6** of Knock Out Damage. However, you can then choose to do three things whenever you Attack: Straight Knock Out Damage, **Deadly Damage**, or an **Area Attack**. To do a Deadly Damage attack, you simply subtract 2d6 from your total dice. To do an Area Attack, subtract 4d6 from your total dice; the area is measured as a Radius of Spaces equal to the total dice you normally do. Thus, if you have a 12d6 Minor Attack Group, and you want to do an Area Attack, it will be 8d6 over a 12 Space Radius area.

GMs might also allow other straight-up damage options with this kind of Power.

Major Attack Groups give you a lot of flexibility, and will tend to be the most common forms of Attack Powers. They cost **3 Points** per **+1d6** of base Attack. In addition to all the things you can do in the Minor Groups, you can also do **Flash Attacks** and **Entangle Attacks**. To do a Flash Attack, simply use the number of Knock Out Damage dice you can normally do as Flash Dice. For every 5 points rolled (round up), the target is flashed for 1 Round. For example, rolling 23 means the target is blinded for 5 Rounds, while rolling 42 means the target is blinded for 8 Rounds. To do an Entangle Attack, divide the number of dice you normally do in half (this time, round *down*). This is the number of dice in Structure such an Entangle will have, and this number multiplied by **3** is also the amount of ARMOR the Entangle has. For example, a 12d6 Major Attack Group will do Entangles that have 6d6 Structure and 18 ARMOR. To get out of an Entangle, damage must be done to it (past the ARMOR) to take away Structure. Both Knock Out and Deadly Damage will do damage to an Entangle.

> ***Example*** *– Someone is hit with a 15 ARMOR, 5D6 Entangle. 17 Structure is rolled. They have a 9 PHY. On their next Action, they use their raw strength to try and break out. They roll 30 on 9d6. The 15 ARMOR is subtracted, and the rest is applied to the Structure. There's still 2 Structure left, but they are almost free...*

With a Major Attack Group, the GM may allow you to use other Powers that can be found in Total Fuzion settings. You will need to work this out ahead of time, however.

Defense Powers

There are two Defense Powers in S.P.A.R.K. ...

ARMOR: This could be tough skin, a suit of some kind, or a force field. No matter what it is, it protects the Character from Damage. It does *not* stack with the Character's Defense Stat; whichever of those two numbers is higher, that's the one that is applied to Knock Out Damage Attacks. Only ARMOR will block Deadly Damage Attacks, however.

Every **1 Point** spent will buy **2 Points** of ARMOR.

> ***Important Note*** *– For game balance purposes, a Character should never have more Points in this Power than their Physical Characteristic (PHY) rating*.

PROTECTED SIGHT: This is a special Defense Power that protects against Flash Attacks. Every **1 Point** spent provides **5** levels of Protected Sight, which are subtracted from the amount rolled on the Flash dice before the number of blinded Rounds are determined..

Movement Powers

In S.P.A.R.K., there are three forms of Super Powered Movement –

FLIGHT: For every **1 Point**, the Character can fly **5** Spaces in a Round of Action.

HYPER-RUNNING: For every **1 Point**, the Character can add **+5** Spaces to the distance they can Run in a Round (see Basic Actions below). This also adds **+8** Spaces to their Sprint.

TELEPORTATION: For every **1 Point**, the Character can instantly disappear and reappear **5** Spaces away in a Round.

Miscellaneous Powers

These are just some of the possible Super Powers that a Character could have. Once again, **Alpha/Omega** will have a much wider array to choose from. However, these should get you by for simpler games.

ADAPTATION: This is a set of Powers that represents either a physiology that is truly super human or a self-contained, protective environment (such as a battlesuit). Adaptation includes self-contained breathing (or a lack of need to breathe), as well as immunity to extreme temperatures, pressure, radiation, and vacuum. Also, someone with this Power does not need to worry about eating or other needs, and they need not fear poisons or disease. This Power costs **9 Points**.

ALL-AROUND SENSING: This Power allows the user to use one or more senses in a 360-degree arc around them. In other words, they can have "eyes in the back of their head." This makes it virtually impossible for someone to sneak up behind such a Character. It costs **5 Points**.

CLINGING: The ability to stick to surfaces and walk on walls and ceilings with no hindrance. **2 Points**.

HYPERSENSES: This Power provides even keener perceptions than the Acute Talents. **1 Point** for a +4 with a particular sense, as well as eliminating one Range Category of penalties.

INVISIBILITY: You can choose to be simply unseen, or go for the whole package. At the higher point cost, the Character is unseen, unheard, and cannot be smelled either. Costs **2 Points** to be Unseen, **6 Points** for the whole package.

MICROSCOPIC VISION: The Character can view nearby objects at 10x magnification. This power may be purchased more than once; the second time allows 100x magnifications, the third time 1000x, etc. **1 Point** per level.

SEE IN THE DARK: This Power enables the user to see normally in totally dark situations (inside caves, pitch-black night, etc.). This is the ability to see in the absence of any light (though it will not help so much in a fog bank). **3 Points**.

SEE THROUGH WALLS: This Power lets the user see through solid structures, such as doors, walls, dirt, etc.. The thickness of the material doesn't really matter (though it will be pretty pointless to look through endless tracks of pure earth). A reasonably common substance (or a few uncommon substances) must be defined as capable of blocking this Sense when it is acquired. **4 Points**.

SHAPESHIFT: The Power to assume different forms. For **4 Points**, you can be almost any humanoid you want. For **6 Points**, you can be pretty much anything that's about your size.

SPEAK ANY LANGUAGE: The user is able to comprehend and communicate in any language they encounter. **4 Points**.

STRETCHING: The Power to stretch body parts over great distances. Each **1 Point** let's you stretch over **2 Spaces** of distance.

THERMAL VISION: This Power gives the user the ability to see heat patterns and degrees of warmth and coolness (this is sometimes called "Infared Vision" or "Infravision"). Even in fairly dark conditions, the user can make their way fairly easily. They can also often make out people and sources of heat (or severe cold) on the other side of non-insulated walls. Extreme or sudden sources of heat or cold will, however, throw this Sense off, rendering it useless. **1 Point**.

TRACKING SENSE: The user can use one of their senses (usually Smell) to track someone. The Target Number for the Perception roll will be determined by the GM, but at least an 18, usually. **2 Points**.

Part 2: How to Play

S.P.A.R.K. is a very simple set of game rules, and the goal here is to keep things short and sweet. Some knowledge of gaming is assumed here. If you are clueless, however, it's not really all that hard at all. It really comes down to saying what you want to do and rolling some dice to see if you did it, and how well you did it.

Grab the Dice

The most important thing to remember in S.P.A.R.K. (and any FUZION game, for that matter) is that, to do ***anything*** that requires you to roll, simply add "

AV + 3d6

That's it. That's how you roll for everything, from Skill checks to Attack rolls.

AV stands for Action Value, a measurement of your Character's combined raw ability (Characteristic) and training (Skill Group). Simply add the appropriate Characteristic and Skill Group together to get your Character's AV for a task.

Want to hit someone with a fist? Add your Combat (COM) and Martial Artist scores together. Want to jump over a table and out the window? Add your COM + Athlete together. Want to remember a fact that might save your skin? Add your MEN + Scholar scores. Want to blast someone with an Lightning Bolt? Add your COM + Paranormal.

In each of the above cases, you would then roll 3d6 and add the result to your AV. How well you do determines if you succeed or not, as well as whether you just "get by" or do it with style. The amount you generate is called an **Action Total**, and this number is compared to the following chart. It is up to the Game Master to decide what level you need to roll to succeed.

TARGET NUMBER- DIFFICULTY

10 - Simple (Climb a ladder, Break into a garden shed, Find a someone in a room)

14 - Standard (Climb a tree, Break into a house, Find someone in a house)

18 - Advanced (Climb a dying tree, Break into a fancy house, Find someone in an office building)

22 - Complicated (Climb a stone wall, Break into an expensive manor, Find someone in a large office complex)

26 - Hard (Climb a brick wall, Break into a corporate office, Find someone in a city)

30 - Really Hard (Climb a mostly smooth cliff face, Break into a high-tech office, Find someone in a state)

34 - Extreme (Climb a mostly smooth cliff face in terrible winds, Break into the Pentagon, Find someone in the United States)

38 - Nigh Impossible (Climb a sheer surface through pure will, Break into Area 51 during a high state of alert, Find someone on the planet that really doesn't want to be found)

By default, the Game Master should set **14** as your Target Number, but they can go higher or lower as the situation demands.

There is one **Big Exception** to using this system, and that's when you are competing directly against another Character to get something done. One form of this is Combat (which is discussed in more detail shortly). The other simply involves **Opposed Rolls**.

If two Characters are working against each other, each one rolls and generates an Action Total (based on the appropriate Skill Group, of course). The higher roll succeeds (so long as both rolls at least reach whatever minimum level of success the Game Master thinks is needed).

One final note about the basics of this system " a Character may try to do something for which they have no training. The Game Master may decide that it's simply impossible and allow no roll. However, if the Character should have a chance, simply use their raw Characteristic score as appropriate, but make the Difficulty at least one "stage" higher.

Eternity in a Heartbeat

Most of the time, the Game Master will just tell you how long it takes to get something done. You take the time, you move on. However, just how long something takes may become very important in some circumstances.

In such situations, you use the **Time Chart** as part of your planning. When the Game Master sets a Target Number for a task, they will also choose how long the task will take based on the following chart:

1 Round (3 Seconds)

4 Rounds = 1 Turn (12 Seconds)

5 Turns = 1 Minute

5 Minutes

20 Minutes

1 Hour

6 Hours

1 Day

1 Week

1 Month

3 Months

1 Year

If you want to take less time than the Game Master assigns, the task will be that much harder. As a general rule, each step up the Time Chart (which shortens the time taken) raises the Target Number by one "stage." Conversely, if you are willing to take more time, each step down the chart can lower the Difficulty by a "stage."

Of course, the Game Master should feel free to state an absolute minimum time required for a task. After all, there's no way you can build a house in a minute (at least not without some serious superpowers). A maximum benefit from extra time is also more than fair. Let's face it, there's only so much preparation for baking a cake you can do.

It's at the top of the Time Chart that we are dealing with **Combat Time**, which is how we measure out the steps Characters go through when they are bashing each others' brains in.

Simply put, when Combat Time is invoked (usually because someone is trying to hurt someone else), everything is done in **Rounds**. Each **Action** takes one Round. Four (4) Rounds make up a Turn. Rounds and Turns are really all you need to worry about, because conflicts never really get past a few Turns.

At the beginning of a conflict, everyone **Rolls Initiative** for their Character. The base Action Value (AV) for this roll is your raw Combat (COM) Characteristic, plus any Combat Sense you might have (from the Talents section). The Character with the highest roll gets to go first, followed by the Character with the next highest roll, and so on. In the case of ties, the Character with the highest COM goes first. If there is still a tie, each Character rolls a separate die (or else the Game Master just decides).

Your Initiative score remains in place for a full Turn. At the start of a new Turn, everyone rolls again.

The following is a list of Actions that can be taken in a Round. It is important to note that you can normally move a number of Spaces equal to your MOV (Move) Characteristic and still take one of these Actions (with "Getting Up" being a notable exception), but once you take an Action, you are done until the next Round. In other words, you can Move and Attack, but you cannot Attack and then Move.

Basic Actions

Attack: Punch, stab, poke, shoot, bite, claw... you get the idea.

Block: Also known as "Parry," this involves stopping an incoming Melee or Hand to Hand attack from hitting you. Just roll an "attack roll" (Martial Artist) in opposition to the one being done against you; high roll wins. You can do this even before your Initiative score comes up (though it still counts as your Action for that Round). If you succeed, you make the attacker wait until after you go on the next Round. Also, once you start Blocking, you can keep doing it against other attacks until you go on the next Round. However, each additional attempt suffers a cumulative "2; AV penalty; the second Block is at –2, the third Block is at –4, and so on.

Dodge: Nothing fancy about this – just get out of the way! Like Blocking, you can do this even before your Initiative comes up (but you have no other Action until the next Round). Until you go again, you get +3 to your Defense Value (DV) versus all incoming attacks.

Draw Weapon: Readying a Weapon normally takes an Action (although Fast Draw will turn this into a 0-time activity).

Get Up: Done after you fall or get knocked down (or when someone barges in to kill you while you sleep). If you Get Up, you can move up to your MOV **or** take another Action, but not both.

Grab: You can get your hands on your opponent, so long as you are willing to deal with a –2 AV. If you hit, you can hold onto your opponent (and squeeze them for your PHY score in Knock Out Damage), throw them a Space or two (again, for PHY Knock Out Damage), or simply refuse to let them go. Both of you are at –3 to your DV against all other attacks while you hold on. Each Round when it their time to act, you'll both make a PHY-based Athletics test to see if you hold on or they get free. If you still have them Grabbed, you can keep doing Knock Out Damage to them on your Initiative. This Action can also be used to grab a weapon away from an opponent.

Leap: In a Round, the number of spaces a Character can leap across (with at least a couple of steps for a running start) is equal to their MOV. The Character can jump straight up (with something of a running start) 1/2 this amount (round up).

Leap = MOV

Run: In a Round, a Character can move a number of **Spaces** (usually measured as meters or yards) equal to their Movement (MOV) multiplied by 2.

Run = MOV x 2

Sprint: You can go your Move (MOV) x 3 Spaces in a Round, but you are at o to your AV and DV until your next Action (with a minimum of 1).

Sprint = MOVE x 3

Swim: In a Round, the number of Spaces a Character can swim as an Action is equal to their Move Characteristic.

Swim = MOV

Throw: Chuck a stone, dagger, or hamster as far as your PHY x 5 in Spaces.

Whatever Else: The Game Master is the final judge as to what else counts as an Action. Truly simple stuff (like dropping a weapon or shouting a command) should take no time at all, but some things (like binding someone's wounds or putting on armor) will probably take at least a couple of Rounds or more.

Advanced Actions

These add a bit more complexity to the mix, but they also add a bit more style *and* substance.

Aim: For every Round that you do nothing else but this (Full Action, no moving), you get +1 to your AV (up to +3 maximum). You have to aim at the same target the entire time.

Attack Twice: If you have a weapon in each hand, you can attempt to hit one target twice or hit two different targets in Melee range. Alternately, two Ranged weapons can be used to fire twice, with the same modifiers. This is a Full Action (you cannot move at all when doing this), and you suffer a –2 AV for each attack. You are also a –5 to your DV until you act again, making this a very risky maneuver.

Called Shot: If you want to go for broke, you can try to hit your target in the head or some other vital spot. Doing so means you suffer a –6 AV, but if you succeed, you do **double damage** (after defenses are subtracted)**.**

Charge: This Action allows you to attack at the end of a full Run. Suffer a –2 AV and a –3 DV, but you add +1d6 for every 10 Spaces you ran (fractions round up).

Choke Hold: Useful for keeping people from screaming out, this attack suffers a –4 to the AV, and the attacker and the target are both at –3 DV versus other attacks (much like Grab). So long as the target is held, the attacker can do their PHY rating (up to 4d6, maximum) in Deadly Damage. So long as they are held, the opponent cannot breath or shout out a warning.

Disarm: Instead of attacking a target, you can attack their weapon. If you hit, each Character rolls PHY + Melee. If you win, the weapon flies out of their hand. On a tie or worse, they hold onto their weapon.

Draw and Attack: Though it normally takes an Action to ready a Melee Weapon, you can take a –3 AV and -2 DV penalty and also attack on the same Round.

Kick: At a penalty of –1 AV and –1 DV, you can add +1d6 to your PHY in Knock Out Damage.

Legendary Blow: At a penalty of –3 AV and –3 DV, you can add +3d6 Damage to any attack you are performing.

Lethal Attack: At a penalty of –2 AV, you can make a Knock Out Attack (such as bare fists) do Deadly Damage.

Mighty Blow: At a penalty of –2 AV and –2 DV, you can add +2d6 Damage to any attack you are performing.

Sweep/Trip: Instead of doing Damage, you can (upon a successful attack) cause an opponent to fall down. They are at –5 to their DV until they Get Up, and they also lose –2 on their Initiative.

When the Time for Talking is at an End…

By now, you've seen the terms **AV** (Action Value) and **DV** (Defense Value) quite a bit. Remember where we said there was a Big Exception to the normal means of figuring out if you succeeded in a task? Here it is – whenever you are trying to hit another Character, you roll as before:

AV + 3d6

Instead of comparing it to the Difficulty Chart, however, your Target Number is the target's:

DV + 10

It's that simple. If you have an AV of 9 (say, from your COM of 5 and a Martial Artist score of 4), and your opponent has a DV of 8 (from a COM of 3 and an Athlete score of 5), you need to roll a total of **18** or better to hit your opponent.

All the maneuvers and other factors (such as Weapon bonuses or Range penalties) are simply added and subtracted from these base numbers. Speaking of Range modifiers – whenever you are Throwing something or using firearms or a Paranormal power to hit something at range, the following chart should be used to determine how hard it is. The numbers in the middle columns are in Spaces (or meters, or yards as you prefer):

CATEGORY	THROWN	POWER/GUN	AV PENALTY
Melee	0-2	0-2	-0
Very Close	3-6	3-6	-1
Close	7-10	7-10	-2
Medium	11-20	11-50	-4
Long	21-50	51-100	-6
Extreme	51+	101+	-8

Another important concept comes into play with some **Area Effect** attacks. Instead of having to hit a specific target with Area Effect attacks, you need only hit a Target Number of **14** to succeed.

Pain Management

There are two types of Damage in S.P.A.R.K. **Knock Out** and **Deadly**. Knock Out Damage hurts like all heck, but you don't normally die from it (unless you take too much of it). Deadly Damage, however, is all about making you dead.

Whichever you hit with, you roll the appropriate number of dice and count the points. In the case of a straight punch, you roll dice equal to your PHY rating. Paranormal Powers and Weapons have their own Damage ratings as well; in the former case, the number is based on how many dice were purchased for the Power, while the latter case is addressed in **Appendix 4: Weapons**.

Once you have a Damage total, the target gets to subtract their appropriate protection. In the case of Knock Out Damage, they can subtract their **Defense** OR their **ARMOR** (if any), whichever value is *higher*. These values do **not** stack.

In the case of Deadly Damage, however, there is no choice. Only ARMOR will defend against this kind of damage.

Once defenses have been applied to the Damage, the remaining points are subtracted from the target's **Stun** and **Hits** as appropriate. Knock Out Damage is subtracted directly from Stun; for every **5 total** Stun a Character loses, they also lose 1 Hit (as bruising and battering results). Deadly Damage is subtracted directly from Hits **and** Stun, one-for-one.

There are three states a person who has suffered too much Damage can be in:

Dazed: If ever you suffer enough Damage from a single attack to lose more than 1/2 of your **Total Stun** (your full value when you are totally healthy), you are Dazed. You can do nothing on your next Action *except* recover from being Dazed; you are at –5 DV until that time.

Knocked Out: If ever you lose all of your Stun, you are unconscious. Your body is prone on the ground (DV = 0) and you will remain that way until you heal back up somehow. Any additional Damage you take, regardless of the source, is considered Deadly Damage now.

Dead: If ever you lose so many Hits that you end up at –10 (ten past your normal total), you are dead and gone.

Knock Out Damage heals back at the rate of 1d6 returned for every full **Turn** your Character has a chance to rest (strictly out of a combat situation).

Deadly Damage takes much longer to heal. Without any outside help, it will take a full **Day** for your character to heal back 1d6 of Deadly Damage.

Appendices, AKA "Other Stuff"

Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms

Action: Whenever a Character tries to do something, it is called an Action. Characters can only do one Action in a **Round**.

Action Value/Attack Value (AV): Add this number to 3d6 to get an Action Total. Compare the Action Total to the **Target Number**, and if it equals or exceeds that number, the attack or action is a success.

Character: The persona that you play in the game. Much like a role in a play, but there are numbers that define what you can do in game terms as well.

Characteristics: These are the main defining numbers that tell you what your Character's strengths and weaknesses are.

Combat Rating: A measure of combat power and ability that establishes a "balance point" that all Characters must fit within. More is explained about this in **Appendix 5**.

Damage: Whenever you hit another character in combat, you roll dice of Damage to determine the effect. If they take enough Damage, they will be **Dazed**, **Knocked Out**, or even **Dead**.

Dazed: When a Character is Dazed, they can do nothing for the next **Round** of Actions except shake the dizziness and pain off. They suffer a "5; to their **Defense Value** until after they have recovered from this state. A Character is Dazed when any one attack causes them to lose more than 1/2 their total Stun.

Dead: When a Character has suffered so many Hits that they are at –10, they are considered Dead. Sorry. It happens.

Deadly: This is the "Cut you, pierce you, stab you" Damage that only ARMOR will defend against. The Defense Stat has no effect on Deadly Damage.

Defense Value (DV): This rating is used to determine what it takes for someone to hit your Character. Simply add it to 10 to get the **Target Number** needed to hit.

Game Master (GM): The person who runs the game, controls all the Bad Guys, tells the main part of the story, and everything else so that the other Players can enjoy their experience with the game.

Initiative: Whenever Combat starts or the timing of something is important, all Characters must roll to see who goes first, who goes second, and so on. This is done by rolling 3d6 and adding the COM Characteristic to the result, with the highest result going first.

Knock Out: This is damage that is not necessarily lethal, but hurts like the dickens anyway. Knock Out Damage subtracts either ARMOR **or** Defense, whichever is higher.

Knocked Out: When your Character has reached 0 Hits, they are Knocked Out, unconscious, unable to move, and in deep trouble. Over time, they can get back up and do things, but this is up to the **Game Master**.

Powers: The special abilities of Super Powered Characters, those things that allow them to do what normal people cannot. In the game, Powers are described in raw effect. What they look like and where they come from for a Character is a function of **Special Effect**.

Round: A period of time equal to 3 seconds (more or less) in which **Actions** take place. Four of these equal a **Turn**.

Skill Groups: These represent what your Character has trained at, practiced, or studied over time.

Spaces: A measurement of distance for when Characters are moving during Combat **Rounds**. In the "real world," this distance would be equivalent to a meter or yard. The **Game Master** should decide how big a Space is depending on whether they are using classic RPG miniatures, action figures, or something else entirely.

Special Effect: The style and "flavor" of a set of **Powers** that is defined by a Player for their Character.

Talents: These represent unique features of your Character, such as special inborn gifts, exceptional training, or background opportunities that have developed for the Character.

Target Number: The number needed for success for any rolled **Action**. For most non-combat Actions, this is a set number decided on by the **Game Master**; in Combat, it is determined by adding 10 to the target's **Defense Value**.

Turn: A period of time equal to four (4) **Rounds**. Some Spells and other things take a full Turn to happen, or else last for a Turn.

Appendix 2: The Strength Chart

Whenever a Character wants to lift something or throw something, just roll their PHY + **1d6** and consult the following chart:

Total	Lift	Throw a Rock	Throw a Person
2	Bag of potatoes	5 Meters	0 Meters
4	10-13 yr old Child	10 Meters	0 Meters
6	Adult Female	40 Meters	0 Meters
8	Adult Male	80 Meters	1 Meter
10	Lion	120 Meters	5 Meters
12	Bear	1/2 Mile	10 Meters
14	Car	1 Mile	40 Meters
16	Elephant	2 Miles	80 Meters
18	18-Wheeler	5 Miles	120 Meters
20	Airplane	10 Miles	1/2 Mile
22	Naval Destroyer	25 Miles	1 Mile
24	Naval Battleship	50 Miles	2 Miles
26	Naval Aircraft Carrier	100 Miles	5 Miles

28	Really Big Stuff	250 Miles	10 Miles
30	Omigod Huge	500 Miles	25 Miles
31+	Purely GM Discretion...		

Appendix 3: Breaking Stuff

The one constant of superpowered settings is property damage. Everything in the world can be defined in terms of Armor and Structure, and when you try to break something, you roll dice of damage against it.

Damage against Stuff is not quite the same as damage against people, though. When doing Knock Out Damage, the results should be cut in half (round down) *before* being applied to the Armor and Structure of an item. The Game Master may wish to ignore this rule for anyone with a PHY of 9 or higher. At the same time, the GM may choose to apply this rule to Deadly Attacks that don't do "massive" damage (like knives and pistols).

There are two sets of Definers for the purpose of Breaking Stuff. The first set deals with how Simple or Complex something is. If an item is Simple (such as a mailbox or a door), it is Damaged whenever it takes any Structure points off, and it is Destroyed once it has lost all of its Structure. If an object is Complex (such as a car or fuel pumping station), then it Partially Malfunctioning when it has lost any Structure. It is Massively Malfunctioning when it loses over half of its Structure, and Destroyed when all of its Structure is gone.

Items are also Small or Big. A Small item is simply Destroyed when all the Structure is gone. For Big objects, however, such as buildings or cargo ships, the listed Structure represents about a cubic meter of material. When it has been eliminated, there is at least a large hole present. This may still result in Malfunctions, depending on *where* the damage is done (say, for example, the engine room of a large starship).

Examples from "The Street:"

ITEM	DEFINERS	ARMOR	STRUCTURE
Street Light	Complex, Small	14	10
Dumpster	Simple, Small	18	20
ATM	Complex, Small	12	20
Car	Complex, Small	8	40
Armored Car	Complex, Small	30	70
Office Building*	Simple, Big	10	10
Tree	Simple, Small	6	20-40
Bank Vault	Simple, Big	40	30
Vending Cart	Simple, Small	6	8

* - Small buildings have 100-200 total Structure, medium buildings have 300-500, and large complexes or skyscrapers have 1000 or more.

Note that the preceding values are strictly subjective to the author's interpretation. Please feel free to adjust them to suit your own version of Reality.

Appendix 4: Weapons

Below are some basic stats for sample Weapons that might be found and used in a S.P.A.R.K. game. Generally, Characters should rely on their Powers rather than normal weapons, but these may well be

encountered in the hands of antagonists (or Characters who rely more on "gadgetry" than actual powers or high technology). Unless otherwise noted, all Damage is Deadly.

WEAPON	AV	DAMAGE	PHY	ROF	ROUNDS	NOTES
Pistol	+1	4d6	3	3	15	
Heavy Pistol	+0	6d6	4	2	7	
Assault Rifle	+1	6d6	4	10	60	Autofire
Shotgun	+2	7d6	4	1	7	Shotgun Damage
Machine Gun	+0	8d6	7	10	100+	Autofire
Blaster	+1	10d6	4	1	50	Knock Out Damage
Bow	+0	6d6	5	1	1	No MOV when firing
Knife	+1	1d6	2	-	-	2d6 Max
Sword	+1	3d6	4	-	-	6d6 Max
Great Sword	+1	4d6	5	-	-	8d6 Max

AV: The AV bonus or penalty for using the Weapon

PHY: The minimum PHY rating required to use the Weapon effectively. For every point under, the user suffers a 1; AV and, in the case of the Bow, Knife, Sword, or Great Sword, also loses a d6 of Damage. Also in the case of those last three, every point of PHY *above* the PHY required adds a +1d6 of Damage, up to *twice* the base listed dice of Damage. For example, a Knife can never do more than 2d6 of Deadly Damage, no matter how strong the user.

ROF: Rate of Fire; how many times the Weapon can be used in a single Round as an Action. For each use over the first, there is a cumulative –1 AV penalty. For example, firing the Pistol 3 times in a Round means each shot will suffer a –2 AV penalty.

ROUNDS: The typical number of shots that can be taken before an Action must be spent reloading the Weapon.

Autofire: Instead of the normal ROF rules, use these: In firing at a single target, an additional shot hits the target for every 2 rolled over the Target Number (needed a 17, rolled a 22, 3 shots hit). Alternately, up to 3 targets can be fired at in one Action, with no penalties (though only 1 shot can hit each).

Shotgun Damage: At up to Close Range, the Shotgun does +1d6 of Damage. At Long Range, it does –2d6 Damage, and can do no damage past that Range.

Appendix 5: Combat Ratings

This is a tool for Game Masters to use, one that allows them to make sure that everyone in the game is playing at the same "level" as everyone else. It also helps the Game Master decide how powerful to make the Bad Guys that they are utilizing against the Player Characters.

The concept is pretty easy " just use the simple addition formulas to determine the effective Combat Rating of the characters. The Game Master can set a limit based on these formulas and ensure that each Player Character in the game doesn't exceed that limit. The limits associated with the kinds of Games (Alpha, Beta, etc.) are compatible with the Alpha/Omega structure and are highly recommended.

There are two measures to consider in S.P.A.R.K. – **Fighting Level** and **Para Level**.

Fighting Level is easy to measure. Just use the following formula to determine any Character's Combat Level:

PHY + COM + MARTIAL ARTIST

This means you add the Character's Physical Characteristic to their Combat Characteristic. Then you add their Martial Artist Skill Group level. Alternately, if they have a higher level in something like Athlete or Soldier, you might want to use that (since Athlete can be used to Evade attacks, and Soldier can be used for ranged combat with weapons). The resulting value is how powerful the Character is in straight-up physical combat.

Thus, a Character with a 9 PHY, 7 COM, and 5 Martial Artist has a Combat Level of 21 (which fits just fine in an Alpha Game).

Para Level, a measure of a Character's facility with their paranormal powers, is only slightly more complicated, but it still involves very simple math. The basic formula for is:

COM + PARANORMAL + DICE IN ATTACK

This means you add the Combat Characteristic to your levels in Paranormal. Then you add the number of dice you can throw in a straight-up Attack with your Attack Power.

Thus, a Character with a COM of 6, a Paranormal rating of 9, and a Minor Attack Group with 12d6 has a Power Level of 27, which fits into a Gamma Game

Appendix 6: Experience and Improving Characters

If you play S.P.A.R.K. over time, you will want the Characters in the game to grow and improve. This is done with Experience.

The Game Master awards Experience in additional **Points** at the end of each session of game play, according to the following rules:

Played in a game: +1

Played well: +1

Overcame great odds: +1

Players may take these Points and spend them like they did the initial Points they received at the beginning of the game. However, there are some rules that Game Masters should follow to keep things balanced and even over time.

1) No Skill Group should go up by more than 1 Point per game session.
2) No Attack Power should go up by more than 1 Point per game session, if that.
3) No Characteristic should go up by more than 1 Point per game session, if that.
4) Keep an eye on Combat Ratings if you are using them (**Appendix 5**); the Game Master should not let Combat Ratings go up every session. Once every 3 sessions is probably best.